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The Friday Letter

Vol. 7 No. 13

JUL 23 '87

July 2, 1987

On the Hill



On July 1, the Congress agreed to the Conference Report on H.R. 1827, the Supplemental Appropriations for FY 1987. The following provisions affect FNS:

- o Removes a cap on the authorization for WIC in FY 1989;

- o Eliminates the limitation on tuition affecting the participation of private school students in programs authorized by the National School Lunch and Child Nutrition Acts;

- o Appropriates \$167,500,000 to correct the child nutrition rollover deficiency; and

- o Appropriates \$3,426,000 for the Special Milk Program.

Other items of interest include:

- o Deletes language which would have directed the Bureau of Labor Statistics to develop and publish a separate Consumer Price Index for the elderly;

- o Appropriates \$23,000,000 for the Work Incentive's Program;

- o Appropriates \$1,400,000 for the Home Delivered Nutrition Services for the Elderly (Meals on Wheels Program);

- o Appropriates \$18.75 million for maternal and child care block grant;

- o Appropriates \$700,000 for the National Commission to Prevent Infant Mortality; such sums to be available until September 30, 1988;

CURRENT RECORDS

- o Includes a substantial increase in funds (\$145,000,000) for health and education services for homeless Americans based on recently passed legislation, H.R. 558, the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act; and

- o Restricts Federal employee drug testing until certain conditions have been met.

Our best estimation currently is that the President will sign the bill.

-Story by Frank Ippolito
Governmental Affairs Staff

Public Information Directors Hold Annual Meeting

"Anyone working in government is in public information. Corporate officers are accountable to their board of directors. And, as public servants, we are accountable to voters," Assistant Secretary John W. Bode told regional and headquarters information staff at a luncheon meeting on June 16. "I believe in getting out and telling our story and being ready to answer whatever question we are asked."

(Public Information continued page 2)



Have a safe 4th of July!

Bode and Administrator Anna Kondratas were keynote speakers at the annual information directors meeting at the Best Western Inn in Springfield, Virginia.

In her remarks, Kondratas also stressed the significance of the public information function. "How you market something and how you present it is how the public will perceive it, and perception creates reality," she said. Kondratas urged the conferees to emphasize the positive in Administration and agency achievements, such as a reduced food stamp error rate, a widespread consensus on the need to reduce welfare dependency through work, and the success of our private-public partnership in the commodity program.

Their comments highlighted a full 3-day agenda coordinated by Linda Boling, OGAPI, that included a wide range of briefings and a provocative management training session.

OGAPI Director Maria Falcone welcomed participants to the June 16 meeting which included updates on legislation, regional operations, management and financial issues, and the USDA and FNS roles in the "Just Say No" campaign. A case study of the WRC television series, "Flunking School Lunch," was the focus of a discussion on ways to respond to negative and inaccurate media coverage of our programs.

The June 17 agenda featured working sessions on regional and headquarters information operations and a briefing on Capitol Hill by a senior staff member of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

On June 18, conferees met at FNS headquarters to hear updates on special nutrition, family nutrition, program studies, and desktop publishing. Management consultant Ron Stupek provided a 3-hour presentation on effective management, urging managers

to take inventory of their values, goals, skills, and the public they serve.

"Leaders aren't just at the top of an organization," he emphasized. "People who have a vision of where they want to go, and where they want the organization to go, have an impact, whatever their rank."

He urged managers to be aware of the economic and social trends that will provide the context for agency operations in the future.

"You are the window to the world for your colleagues," he concluded of information staff. "You filter what comes in and frame what goes out."

In addition to copious notes, printed handouts, and a renewed camaraderie with their colleagues, the seven regional information directors took back with them a special memento from the meeting: a framed certificate of appreciation for outstanding performance in advancing the mission of the agency.

-Story by Wini Scheffler
Public Information Staff



New Associate Director for Equal Opportunity Named

Naomi Churchill has been appointed Associate Director for Equal Opportunity, Office of Advocacy and Enterprise (formerly the Office of Equal Opportunity). Churchill, who was special assistant/advisor to the chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, succeeds Lawrence Bembry.

MARO Holds Conference for Field Staff

Mid-Atlantic field office staff were brought up to date on program, civil rights, and personnel issues at a conference held in Williamsburg, Virginia, recently by regional office staff.

EEO/Civil Rights Director Christina Turner-Balog provided intensive training in civil rights during her first meeting with the field staff since she was appointed to her position in November.

Personnel matters, including W-4 preparation, performance appraisals, retirement systems, and the Thrifty Savings Plan, were presented by Personnel Officer Jim Kay and Ellen Elizabeth Shannon, position classification specialist.

A full day was devoted to discussing the food stamp quality control review process. Unit Leader Jerry Walker and Food Program Specialist Karen VanDyke handled the session.

Anne Christensen and John Sullivan, unit leaders, spoke about food stamp legislation and retailers, respectively, after an overview of the Food Stamp Program (FSP) as given by Peter Santos, Family Nutrition Programs (FNP) director.

Bob Freiler, Special Nutrition Programs (SNP) director, conducted a question and answer session on TEFAP.

Focus on Management, the use of field staff to perform reviews, and the WIC/FSP information sharing network were covered by Pat Dombroski, Supplemental Food Programs director; Diane Torrice, unit leader; and Mike Buckley, food program specialist.

The field office secretaries also met with Cynthia Bumber, Federal Women's Program manager and FNP food programs specialist, with whom they discussed a variety of issues.

Ed Sheldon, systems analyst, reviewed with the secretaries Crosstalk, WordStar, and Supercalc software, and the field office workload reporting system.

The electronic messaging system, Telemail, was introduced by Marian Wig, public affairs specialist, who conducted a hands-on session for the secretaries.

Video tapes were available for viewing on stress management, persuasive speaking, and career strategies.



Bob Freiler, SNP director, fields questions on TEFAP.



Cynthia Bumber, Federal Women's Program manager and FNP food program specialist (left), discusses personnel issues with field office secretaries (left to right) Claudia Bache, Richmond; Gertrude Finnegan, Towson, MD; Wanda Murray, DC; and June Townsend, Philadelphia.

(Field staff continued page 5)

Field Staff Completes FDP Monitoring Project

Salt Lake City, Utah, Officer-in-Charge Jim Dunn—with the help of field Food Program Specialist Bob Hollowell and MPRO food distribution staffer Don DeBoer—recently completed a special 6-month project to determine the capability of field staff to monitor Food Distribution Program (FDP) sites without direct involvement of the state agency.

According to MPRO's FDP Director John Merz, the project had a dual purpose: to help the state, and to examine the feasibility of expanding the project to their field offices.

DeBoer set the project up with the deputy director of the Utah Department of Social Services and the program coordinator for Federal food programs. Contact was also made with Utah's Division of Aging and Adult Services. From October 1, 1986 through March 31, 1987, Dunn and Hollowell monitored 32 Title III Nutrition Program for the Elderly sites, TEFAP sites, charitable institutions, and correctional institutions for compliance with current Federal regulations. Instead of sending their recommendations directly to the state for review, they forwarded them to the sites. They then worked with the sites to resolve any discrepancies. Finally, Dunn sent each site a closure letter, with a copy to the state agency, and indicated any corrective action taken at each site.

According to Dunn, the project went smoothly, overcoming any initial reservations. The project should translate easily to other field offices, if desired.

-Story by Joanne Widner
MPRO Public Affairs Staff



Father Rivers Leaves FNS

On June 25, the Budget Division held a farewell luncheon for Father Joseph Rivers. Father Rivers was recently ordained a priest in the Liberal Catholic Church. He has served in FNS for 10 years, and is well known as the president and founder of the Orphan Foundation, which aids young adults to become self-sufficient.

In the past, Rivers has inspired many within the agency to act as volunteers at his foundation. Now, Father Rivers is leaving FNS to devote his full time to the Orphan Foundation.

At the luncheon, Jerry Boling, director of the Budget Division, recited a poem, "Ode to Joseph." Boling ended with these lines:

"Goodbye, Father Joseph.
Time for leaving arrives.
May the answers you're seeking
touch other lives."

-Story by Richard Dengrove
Public Information Staff

EEO Training Being Conducted

On June 11, the first in a series of EEO training seminars was held for all FNS headquarters' managers and supervisors. The purpose of this intensive seminar was to give an update on current legal decisions, as well as to provide practical guidelines for meeting the EEO and Affirmative Action responsibilities. The seminar was conducted by Larry Brantley, director, Civil Rights and EEO Division, and Tom Beaumont, USDA Office of Personnel.

The same intensive training has already been presented to managers and supervisors from all of the regional and field offices.

-Story by Civil Rights and Equal
Employment Opportunity Division

New Word Processing Package for FNS

The final selection of the agency's standard word processing package has been made. The new word processing package will be "Wordperfect."

Five word processing packages were evaluated by headquarters and regional volunteers. The packages were Microsoft Word, Samna IV, WordStar 2000, Multimate Advantage, and Wordperfect. Each software package was assigned to a team with a group leader. After a 5-week evaluation period, each leader turned in a Group Summary Evaluation Sheet for his or her team. All responses were tallied and the results were given to the agency's Software Evaluation and Application Sharing Committee.

A reception was held on April 16 by Victor Riche, chairman, Software Evaluation and Application Sharing Committee, and Carol Naughton, director, Information Resources Management Division (IRMD), to honor the team members with a Certificate of Appreciation and to personally thank each volunteer for the time and effort devoted to the project.



Pictured during the reception, from left to right, are Carol Naughton (IRMD), Bob Beard (FDD), Patty Von Reyn (FNP), Bill Sherriff (PED), and Victor Riche (IRMD).



Receiving her Certificate of Appreciation from Carol Naughton is Jeanette Graham, left (IRMD).

Also serving on the evaluation team but not pictured were Sharon Ackerman (IRMD), Catherine Brown (OAE), Susan Carter (PAD), Jay Hirschman (OAE), Sandra Lefler (CND), Michelle Perry (PAD), Laurie Riffe (CND), and Mike Rowe (PDD).

-Story by Jeanette Graham, IRMD
Photos by Paul Rowen, Public Information Staff

(Field staff continued from page 3)



Systems Analyst Ed Sheldon reviews the field office workload reporting system with secretaries (left to right) Connie Carlson, Pittsburgh; Gertrude Finnegan, Townsend, MD; Irene Welsh, Harrisburg; and Jane Almond, Beckley, WV.

-Story and Photos by Marian Wig
MARO Public Affairs Staff

Food Programs Participation Update

Following are preliminary estimates of participation in the Federal-State food assistance programs for the month of April with comparisons to the previous month and to the same month of last year.

	<u>Apr. 1986</u>	<u>Mar. 1987</u>	<u>Apr. 1987 2/</u>
<u>Food Stamp Program: 1/</u>			
People participating (mil.)	19.8	19.6	19.6
Value of bonus coupons (\$ mil.)	898.7	907.7	902.2
Average bonus per person	\$ 45.35	\$ 46.22	\$ 46.05
Total program cost (\$ mil.)	989.7	1,004.1	998.5
<u>National School Lunch Program:</u>			
Number of schools participating (thous.)	89.9	90.0	90.0
Children participating (mil.)	23.7	24.1	23.9
Children reached with free or reduced price lunches (mil.)	11.7	11.9	11.7
Percentage of lunches served free	42.6	42.6	42.3
Percentage of lunches served at reduced price.	6.6	6.7	6.7
Total program cost (\$ mil.)	348.1	374.6	342.0
<u>School Breakfast Program:</u>			
Number of schools participating (thous.)	35.2	37.1	37.1
Children participating (mil.)	3.6	3.8	3.7
Percentage of breakfasts served free or at reduced price	88.4	88.4	88.1
Total program cost (\$ mil.)	45.0	52.3	46.7
<u>Child Care Food Program:</u>			
Number of meals served in centers (mil.)	40.9	41.1	39.3
Number of meals served in homes (mil.)	25.2	26.8	26.4
Percentage of all meals served free	78.0	77.6	77.7
Total program cost (\$ mil.)	46.3	49.5	47.9
<u>Special Supplemental Food Program (WIC):</u>			
People participating (mil.)	3.3	3.5	3.5
Food cost (\$ mil.)	105.5	114.0	114.3
Total program cost (\$ mil.)	131.2	140.1	141.5
<u>Commodity Supplemental Food Program: 3/</u>			
People participating (thous.)	139.5	152.8	154.2
Total program cost (\$ mil.)	2.5	2.7	2.7
<u>Food Distribution to Indians and Needy Families:</u>			
Number of projects in operation	104	106	106
People participating (thous.)	146.4	149.3	145.5
Total program cost (\$ mil.)	4.0	4.3	4.2
<u>Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program:</u>			
Total USDA cost (\$ mil.)	78.0	66.5	66.6

1/ Puerto Rico has been excluded from all months.

2/ Data collected as of June 22, 1987.

3/ Includes data for Commodity Elderly as of January 1987.

Best of the East in the West

The Western Region tapped its local resources again this year, putting on a series of activities in observance of Asian-Pacific Islander Heritage Week. This year's activities included a film on Guam, and a showing of a PBS special called "Paper Angels," the story of Chinese Immigrants awaiting admittance to the U.S. on Angel Island, the west coast equivalent of Ellis Island, in San Francisco Bay.

Three WRO employees participated in a panel discussion on "Growing Up Asian in America." Mel Fong, regional EEO coordinator, shared his experience of growing up in San Francisco's Chinatown, including going to school two blocks from the regional office.



Three panelists gave first-hand accounts of growing up Asian in America: (left to right) Mel Fong, regional EEO coordinator; Zita Viernes, Family Nutrition Programs; and Maria Reyes, WIC.



WRO employees listened intently and enjoyed the remarks of EEO panelists.

Maria Reyes, secretary for the WIC Program, told about her experiences growing up on the West Coast as a "military brat," and returning at age 10 to her native Philippines, where Tagalog was a foreign language to her.

Zita Viernes, a food program specialist in the Food Stamp Program, related similar experiences. At age 10, she returned to Guam with her family and had to adjust from an American upbringing to the more traditional values and lifestyle of Guam.

Even though Chinese food is a staple for many WRO employees, the cuisine is a perennial favorite for hungry WRO'ers during the annual luncheon celebrating its local Asian-Pacific heritage.



Mel Fong, regional EEO coordinator, shows off his Japanese kimono during the panel presentation.

-Story and Photos by
Dee Amaden
WRO Public Affairs Staff

Job Opportunities

FNS is seeking to fill the following vacant positions. To be considered for one of them, submit an up-to-date SF-171, Personal Qualifications Statement, and current performance appraisal to the appropriate personnel office. If you're interested in a Headquarters position, apply to the Employment Branch, Personnel Division, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Alexan-

dria, Virginia 22302. Apply directly to Headquarters office for all GM-14 and 15 positions. For Regional positions, directly to the Regional Office. For details on the requirements for any of the positions listed below, consult the official vacancy announcement. These are posted on designated bulletin boards or you can get copies from the appropriate Regional or Headquarters personnel office.

Friday Letter Vacancy Listing By Vacancy Number

JOB TITLE	AREA OF CONSID.	SERIES	GRADE	CLOSING DATE	VACANCY NUMBER	OFFICE LOCATION
o Clerk/Typist	(L)	GS-322	2/3/4	Open until filled	86-35	FNS
o Secretary Typing	(A)	GS-318	4/5/6	Open Continuous	87-999	Various Locations
o Computer Prog Anlyst (Prom Pot to GS-12)	(A)	GS-334	9/11/12	Open until filled	87-16	IRMD
o Computer Prgmer/Anal. (Temp NTE 1 Year)	(A)	GS-334	5/7	Open until filled	87-46	IRMD
o Supvry Property Mgmt Spec1st	(G)	GM-301	13	07/07/87	87-71	ASD
o Computer Spec1st	(G)	GS-334	13	07/13/87	87-75	IRMD
o Food Prog Spec1st	(FNS-N)	GM-120	13/14	07/13/87	87-76	ORO
o Personnel Officer	(G)	GS-201	12	07/13/87	87-77	MPRO
o Pers Staffing Spec1st	(FNS-H)	GS-212	9/11/12	07/07/87	87-78	PED
o Supvry Food Program Spec1st	(FNS-N)	GM-0120	13	07/16/87	87-79	NTSD
o Contract Spec1st	(FNS-H)	GS-1102	7	07/14/87	87-80	ASD
o Accounting Officer	(G)	GM-510	15	07/20/87	87-81	AC
o Secretary (Typing)	(FNS-H)	GS-0318	6/7	07/13/87	87-82	OAE
o Supvry Grants Mgmt Spec1st	(FNS-N)	GM-501	14	07/27/87	87-83	GMO
o Home Economist	(A)	GS-0493	7/9/11	07/20/87	87-H-05	HNIS

FNS - Food and Nutrition Service

AC - Accounting Division

ASD - Administrative Services Division

* GMO - Grants Management Office, FM

HNIS - Human Nutrition Information Service

IRMD - Information Resources Management Division

MPRO - Mountain Plains Regional Office (Denver, CO)

NTSD - Nutrition Technical Services Division

OAE - Office of Analysis and Evaluation

ORO - Office of Regional Operations

PED - Personnel Division

Area of Consideration

(FNS H) - FNS Headquarters

(FNS N) - FNS Nationwide

(G) - Governmentwide

(A) - All Sources

(L) - Local Commuting Area

* Newly established office